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A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BOMBAY

IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Thomas,

ON APRIL 2ND, 1861,

AT HIS THIRD VISITATION,

BY

JOHN HARDING, D.D.,

BISHOP OF BOMBAY;

AND

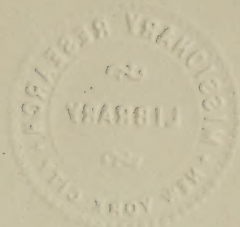
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CHARGE.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

IMMEDIATELY at the close of one of the longest tours which the Bishop of this Diocese has to make, I have found myself called, by the lapse of three years, to the pleasing duty of convening you again within these walls. I had almost wished that I might postpone our meeting; for a state of continuous movement does not bring with it the circumstances under which I would have chosen to make my preparations for addressing you. But I have judged that I should hardly justify myself to you on this plea; and I therefore prefer to lay before you, as I may be able, some of the thoughts which have been passing through my mind upon subjects of common interest to us, relying on your indulgence for whatever imperfections you may trace in the manner in which they are expressed. They will relate, in the first place, to a few particulars of local character, and then to some questions of more

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general importance. May He who "helpeth our infirmities" not withhold His mercy from us, but be to us "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the Spirit of knowledge, and true godliness," for our Master and Saviour's sake.

And first, in reference to local topics. I am sorry that I must correct a mistake into which I was betrayed in my last Charge as to the extent of the increase which had then been granted in our Ecclesiastical Establishment. Thirty-two appointments had been made, and I was under the impression that this was to be the permanent number. A subsequent communication, however, informed me that such was not the case; that the increase which had taken place was for the most part only a temporary one, and that the aggregate number of Chaplains and Assistant Chaplains assigned to us was but thirty.. I need not say to you how disappointed I felt at this intelligence; not only because the insufficiency of the service to the duties required of it is the occasion of ever recurring difficulty to myself, but also because of the serious inconveniences which it has at times incurred upon my brethren, to one and another of whom it has happened to be removed from place to place with a frequency, or an unexpectedness, which I sincerely regret, but have been unable to prevent. Meanwhile, to some of our Stations the consequence has

been a deprivation of sacred ordinances for such a length of time, as has given me the deepest concern. I wish I could say that I had reason to hope for a better state of things. I submitted a plain and urgent statement of the case in the proper quarter; and I am bound to acknowledge with much gratitude that on the part of this Government nothing was wanting to give effect to my representations; but the Home Authorities do not encourage me to expect, under present circumstances, any amelioration.

I rejoice again to report, as at each previous Visitation, an augmentation in the body of our Missionary Clergy! They are now twenty-two. Fifteen of these have either joined us from Europe, or have been ordained here, since I entered the Diocese, between nine and ten years ago. Let us praise God for this token, as we trust it is, of his good will toward us. Among the many many reasons for solicitude in the present condition of India, the steady advance of the Missionary cause is a cheering sign to every Christian eye. For whenever, in any community, we witness love expanding, and especially that highest form of love—the love which is learned from Christ, and from his Cross—the love of human souls, must we not hope and believe that it shall be said of that community, “Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it?” At the same time, I must own that I do not think the

aid which is lent to missions in Western India flows to the extent it ought to do from sources on the spot. The Church Missionary Society, for example, maintains twenty Clergymen, European and Native, in this Diocese. What is a subscription list to the amount of but eleven thousand rupees in a year as a response to the Society's just expectations from us ? And let me add, as an eye-witness of its work, that whether I look on such a scene as that which I have just enjoyed at Sharanpoor, with its Orphanage, its Asylum, its Industrial Institution, its Church, its Native village, and, thank God, I may add, its continually multiplying converts ; or whether I follow labourers like those at Nasik and elsewhere, itinerating systematically through a district, till not a village, be it ever so small, is left, in which the glad tidings of Redemption have not been heard ; or whether I watch the patient toil of brethren like those in Sind, content to persevere day after day, and year after year, in wearying conflict with their subtle disputants, although reaping almost no visible reward ; I must say, I do consider the right of the Society to our cordial co-operation to be so well established, that I fain would ask of you, my Reverend Brethren of the Ecclesiastical Service, to make its proceedings better known among your flocks, and to aid in enlarging its resources to a measure more commensurate with our obligations.

I take advantage of this allusion to the work of

the Church Missionary Society to express my views, derived as they are from observation, on a question which has undergone some discussion among its friends. I mean the expediency of Mission settlements, such as that at Sharanpóor, of which I have just made mention. It has been feared by some that the formation of these settlements will not tend to foster the healthiest form of Christianity; that it will prove a sort of hot-house system, rearing plants of but a sickly character, and unfit, after the tender treatment and protection of this spiritual nursery, to live beneath the rough and blighting blasts of a world into which sooner or later they ought to be transplanted. And it has been asked whether in the New Testament, and especially in our great Missionary Text-book, the Acts of the Apostles, any sanction is afforded to expedients of this kind. Now, I am not quite sure that when, at the beginning of the Gospel, and under Apostolic direction, "all that believed were together, and had all things common," there was not seen in principle something not dissimilar from the Mission settlement, so far as it gathers and shelters the flock of Christ, while the wolves are many, and the sheep are few. Nor do I think that a plan which proffers to the yet half-taught and ill established Christian Native some relief from trials which might be heavier than he could bear, would be discountenanced by Him

who refused to "put new wine into old bottles," by calling his disciples to that for which He judged them scarcely prepared. But to view the matter in another light. Granting that whatever we find in the Acts of the Apostles, sanctioned by them, may generally be considered as a pattern for us to follow, I do not think it is a corollary from this that nothing but what is exemplified there may be adopted now. The circumstances of differing ages and countries may justify very different procedures. And I cannot but think that we have in India a state of things so unlike what was known in the Apostles' times, and in the lands they visited, that we may be warranted to resort to other modes of action than those which they employed. Where was there any thing with which they had to contend to be compared with that which is the grand antagonist to Christianity here, a tyrannous and anti-social caste, holding millions upon millions in one iron bond, and making the man who inclines his ear to the Gospel of Christ an alien, and a horror, and a pest, in his city, his village, and his home? It is this which seems to me to necessitate, at least in many districts, where caste is strong, and bigotry runs high, some protection for our infant Missions. Nor is it protection only that is gained. Without a place of reception for the new disciple, it is hard in most instances to give him the probation under which he ought to pass. Indeed, for

want of some such method by which to engage inquirers in appropriate occupation, how often have they become but eleemosynary hangers-on upon a Mission, and ultimately a blot and discredit to its name. Kishnaghur, once so promising, is, I fear, from what I read in the last Report of the Society, a painful illustration of this. At Sharanpoor, however, as is well known among the people round about, it is an established rule that, "if any will not work, neither should he eat;" and I ascribe not a little of the success which God has given us there, to the stern good sense which has guarded that place from becoming the resort of the indolent and insincere. Such, if they have come thither, have soon found that it was no home for them. Nor, so far as our experience has gone, do I think that we have reason to count the Christians of Sharanpoor a sickly growth. Certainly the way in which the Word of the Lord seems to have "sounded out" from among them into the villages around, bids us hope for better things. It is yet an early day with them; and we would not speak too confidently. But I must own that, having watched that settlement now for seven years, and visited it twice, I am strongly of opinion that where caste is violent, as it is in that neighbourhood, and the converts are few, we do well to give them such a place of refuge; provided that every thing be ordered so as to prevent abuse, and to foster only a sincere, industrious, self-reliant and virtuous

community. Of course, we should much prefer to see our Christian converts abiding from the first wherever the Gospel found them, to "shine as lights in the world." But the next best thing we believe to be the Mission settlement; because, under certain circumstances, the most practicable and most beneficial mode of attaining our grand object, the gathering together of a people for Christ.

But I shall not do my duty if I fail to commend also on this occasion to your willing welcome the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel on its entrance again into the field of Missions here. It is now nine years since the last clergyman who laboured in connexion with the Society quitted the Diocese. Since that time the Board at Home have not been able, until now, to resume their work among us. I confess that I always deemed it to be a cause for much regret that the Society had never been in a situation to retain more than one Missionary for any length of time together at his post. The consequence was, that the work was liable to frequent intermission, and little was accomplished. I ventured to express to the Board very decidedly my own persuasion that it would be far better to postpone the resumption of their Mission in this Presidency until they could appoint at least two ordained Missionaries to be workers together in the field. This, I am glad to say, has now been done. It is, moreover, with a

special object in view, that this appointment has been made. The Board have conceived that the educated classes in Bombay demand at this time particular attention; and the Mission, as now recommenced, will be directed more immediately to them. The step, I think, is wisely taken. We know, indeed, that the Gospel is a message to all, without respect of persons. But extraordinary circumstances may at times constitute a very sufficient reason for singling out one portion of a community for more direct address. Their exigencies may be special, and call for special consideration. And this, it has been thought, is the case with those of the Natives at this Presidency, who, having now participated largely in the educational advantages offered to them in the several Government and Missionary institutions, are, we know well, in a condition of mind eminently critical. Their ancestral creeds have lost their hold, while, for the most part, nothing has replaced them. So urge, then, on the intelligent but unsettled youth of this land, in an effort specifically directed to them, the claims and blessings of the Gospel; to show these seekers after wisdom that what they really need is only to be found in Him, "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,"—this surely is an endeavour which deserves our warmest sympathy. I trust that the Venerable Society will meet with that sympathy at our hands.

We have of late done little for it ; for the truth is, that now-a-days every where, and certainly not less in India than elsewhere, men like to see some practical work going on before they contribute liberally to any cause. For some years past the Society, as I have said, has had but little to show among us ; and we do not wonder therefore that the interest on its behalf has been low. But it will now, we trust, be otherwise. Our Diocesan Committee is not without hope that the two Missionaries already appointed will be followed before long by others, for other spheres of duty in this part of India. And if only they shall all go forward doing the work of true evangelists, and determining, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, simply “to teach and preach Jesus Christ,” neither they, nor the Society they represent, will lack for friendly countenance, for willing contributions, and for co-operating prayer.

Suffer me here to express my earnest desire that no congregation in this Diocese should fail of having at least an annual invitation to succour the sacred cause of Missions by aiding either one or both of our great Church Societies just noticed. No Christian community can be in a flourishing state in which this holy enterprise finds no cordial sympathy. No Christian Pastor can be doing his duty to his flock, especially in this land, if he does not move them to pity the millions sitting in darkness all around them. Nor shall either Pastor or flock take

part with real interest in Missionary works, and not severally find the promise true that, in watering others, they shall be watered also themselves.

It may be proper here to say that the correspondence alluded to in my last Charge as having then been opened with these Societies, with a view to connect our Diocesan Additional Clergy Fund with them, terminated in a negative reply from each. Both Societies deem it, as a general rule, desirable to fix the attention of their Missionaries from the first upon the natives only as their care—a judgment, which long experience, we do not doubt, enforces from them.

I have little to state under the head of Church building. Two of the structures which were in course of erection three years since—the commodious and, I may say, handsome Church at Hydrabad, in Sind; and the little Chapel of St. Peter at Mazagaon—have been completed and consecrated. I have also had the gratification during my late tour to consecrate a Church on Mount Aboo. But since we last met the period has not been favourable to the advancement of works of this kind. The public treasury has been almost wholly closed against them; while the uncertainty of continued residence at any one place in India, owing to the frequent removes necessitated by the circumstances of the country, does not encourage individual exertion. Still I am thankful

for what is going forward. At Aden a subscription has been well sustained for the erection of a Church at the Point; the Trustees of the Bombay Steam Fund having, by their liberal donations, led the way, and made the undertaking practicable. At Mathe-ran a Church is in hand, for which again we shall be mainly indebted to private contribution. At Gorpoorie, in the Poona Cantonment, a Chapel for the Soldiers is rising, the fruit of zealous effort on the part of the Chaplain in charge of that part of the camp, backed by the free-will offerings of the community—those of the Soldiers themselves being by no means the least encouraging. The same zeal is at work at Khandalla, and likely to be crowned with similar success. At Nusseerabad, deprived of its Church Bungalow during the mutiny, I found, when I visited the Station a few weeks since, the Assembly-room and Theatre was the only place of Protestant worship; but I was gratified before I left to see a subscription list begun, which promises, with the aid of Government, at least to secure a building to be exclusively set apart to sacred uses, and capable of receiving a large European congregation. At Neemuch, where again we lost, by reason of the mutiny, what had been our Station Chapel, the Government has authorised steps to be forthwith taken with a view to the erection of a Church. Nor will it be long, I trust, before the Churches now for some years arrested in their progress in the Camps of

Aden and Belgaum will be resumed. Meanwhile, my Brethren, be it ours to bear in mind that the Spiritual temple may advance even where the material fabric still is not. "God's building" does not depend on wood and stone. Only may "the Lord, the giver of life," be with us, and the true sanctuary will prosper, "a habitation of God through the Spirit." Without this, the most magnificent of edifices rise in vain.

In connection with our Ecclesiastical buildings I may advert to the letter addressed by the Right Reverend the Metropolitan to his Clergy, and which was not long since placed in your hands, as to the occasional use of our Churches by the Chaplains of the Church of Scotland, and their congregations. You will have learned from that letter how greatly exaggerated were some reports which had been in circulation as to the intentions of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities in the matter. On the legal question I am aware that all minds were by no means agreed. But, inasmuch as that question has now been decided for us, and it has been ruled that here, in India, the loan of our Churches for Presbyterian worship is not illegal, we shall feel it, I think, to be our part to facilitate the operation of the measure so far as it is in our power. For myself, I think it right to state that when the Government asked me for my opinion on the matter, I gave it to the effect that, if the law put no bar in the way,

the concession was one which, under certain limitations, I thought should be made. I pointed out, indeed, some practical inconveniences and difficulties, and urged the providing of separate places of worship for separate congregations as ultimately the better course; but, so long as these could not be had, it did appear to me that a Chaplain of the Established Church of Scotland, serving with troops of the same persuasion, and having no place in which to assemble them, should be viewed as an exceptional case, and that the use of the Station Church ought not to be refused; provided that the Episcopalian congregation had its two services morning and evening, without disturbance. This has been assented to; and therefore, although I cannot be ignorant that, upon Ecclesiastical grounds, independently of legal considerations, the arrangement is to some minds not an acceptable one, still I trust we shall all be sensible that, as the case now stands, our duty is clear; and that, whenever the occasion arises, we shall be ready, from a principle of Christian submission, to accept the interpretation of the law which has been authoritatively given, and willing, in a spirit of brotherly kindness, to "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." It should, however, be distinctly understood by all parties, that the Station Church is in the custody of the Chaplain; and also that, before it can be opened for Presby-

terian worship, there must be an application made to the Bishop of the Diocese, who will be at liberty, however, to grant its use only for the purposes, and under the conditions, expressed in the Notification from the Government of India, appended to this Charge.

Returning to our own flocks, allow me here to mention a subject which appears to press with growing force on our attention. I allude to the increase, in certain localities, of a European community of various but important character, arising from the commercial and engineering enterprise which is now sensibly advancing itself in this Presidency. In Bombay there is an almost daily addition going on to what we are wont at home to designate by the honourable name of "the working classes;" but which, till of late, were not numerous among Europeans here. At Kurrachee it is much the same. And at both these places, as well as on the lines of Railway in the Deccan, Khandeish, Guzerat, and Sind, bodies of Europeans are to be found, inclusive of educated superintendents, intelligent artizans, and humble labourers, all of whom become, so far as we can reach them, part of that cure of souls which the Providence of God, albeit no human authority, has committed to our charge. The difficulty is that the Chaplains at some of the stations to which my remarks will apply, have their hands already almost more than filled; and are little able to add to their

engagements. Yet, I have a duty to discharge toward these our fellow-countrymen, many of whom stand peculiarly in need of a Pastor's kind and faithful word; and this I would earnestly bespeak for them. If nothing more can be done, a lecture, with a short religious service, might be offered, to be statedly or only occasionally given, wherever they can best assemble. This, too, would be sure to open the way to other opportunities of useful influence and intercourse. I know that I may reckon on the charity and zeal of every faithful Minister of Christ to do what in him lies in this case. And his work will be rewarded. I cannot forget what I saw in proof of this on the Baroda Railway a few months since, the large gatherings of English workmen whom I had the privilege to meet, and the marked benefits resulting from the earnest and benevolent exertions of the Chaplain of Surat, supported as he has been most cordially by the authorities on that line.

Allied to this topic is another. In Bombay, and in all our large Stations, there are many persons, as well of European as of mixed extraction, to whom the Clergy do not, and cannot gain the access which they would. And yet this class is one of great influence for good, or for evil—alas! too much for evil, must we not fear, so long as a large proportion of them are what they are. Then again in our Military Cantonments, how seldom can the Chaplain

obtain that acquaintance with the soldiers individually which he feels to be desirable. His varied occupations, or his state of health, the climate, and other causes, prevent him from carrying out so complete a pastoral visitation of his charge as he would wish. In all these cases, might we not, with great advantage, invite to our aid that Lay help which has now for many years proved so invaluable at home? The Scripture reader might surely be as useful an auxiliary to the ministry of the Church in India as he is in England. I do not feel prepared to advise, as the best plan to be adopted, the engaging of persons from home to act as Scripture readers here. The risk is so great of the individual sent out being not exactly adapted to his place and duties, that it seems to me far better to endeavour to find our Lay agency among ourselves. At Poona this has been done, and, I believe, with the best promise of success. And, as there, so I am disposed to hope elsewhere, a fit agent being found, the means for his support would be forthcoming to a large proportion on the spot. But then, is there no unpaid Lay assistance to be had? In our Presidency town, and other large communities, are there no Christian men to be searched out—none who would willingly offer themselves, and that from different ranks in society, to give an hour or two every week, perhaps on every Lord's day, to the blessed work of winning their fellow-men to hear

the words of eternal life ? I was exceedingly gratified to be told by the Chaplain of Nusseerabad that a goodly band of soldiers in that Cantonment were in the habit of acting as messengers of truth and love among their comrades, and as visitors of the sick in the hospitals. I should count any Chaplain a happy pastor who could organise for himself such a company of "fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God." Let us hope that more of this voluntary co-operation with the Clergy on the part of the seriously minded of their flocks may be seen among us. And if in our Camps a few ladies, in concert with the Chaplain, will lend their aid in visiting the wives and families of the soldiers, such Christian efforts will be certainly followed by results of the most beneficial kind to all parties. Lay help from all persons willing to work with us should be cordially accepted. In the first age of the Church the Apostles, and Apostolic men, were glad, as we read, to avail themselves of such assistance. And why should not we ?

In alluding to the soldiers in our Cantonments I am reminded of a practice already resorted to in some stations for the promotion among them of personal piety, by opening the church as a place to which they may resort for private supplication, and reading of the word of God. I should be glad to see this more generally done. Whoever knows any thing of the interior of a barrack, must be

sensible how painfully difficult it is for a religiously disposed man to cultivate habits of individual devotion there. I should rejoice if in every Military station the Church could be made a sanctuary in every sense of the word--a place of safety, to which any man might daily go at some appointed time, and, far from distraction and interference, there kneel down to pour forth his silent prayer, and sit to read and meditate upon the sacred page. A very little arrangement would secure the maintenance of necessary order ; and it should be always laid down as a rule, to be rigidly kept, that only private prayers, and silent readings are to be permitted. Any deviation from this rule would neutralize the object for which the Church was opened, and might lead to irregularities, against which the best intentions would yet be no guarantee. Of course, should the Chaplain find the Church to be the most suitable place in which to meet a Bible class, or other little assemblage for religious instruction, he is at liberty to use it for that purpose. Sincerely do I rejoice to observe that meetings of the Clergy with their people, and especially with soldiers, for social edification, are on the increase. I have been at some of these meetings, and have felt refreshed and cheered in my own pastoral duties by them. They are auxiliary in the highest degree to the great ends of our ministry ; not only knitting together the Pastor and his flock, those of them

especially who most need his help, in the best of bonds, but also rendering his public preaching intelligible and profitable to an extent which few other methods will be found to do.

And here I pass to a question which in some of its aspects partakes of a more general character than the points hitherto mentioned. I very much desire to submit to my brethren in the ministry at this time whether it is too much for us to hope for a wider and deeper extension of true godliness in that part of the Church of Christ which we are set to serve. We are all aware of events having transpired within the last few years under the designation of Revivals in Religion, and which, whether in America or Europe, have, it cannot be denied, resulted in the conversion, properly so called, of many thousands of individuals from a state of carelessness, or of actual crime, to the fear and love of God; as well as in a great increase of earnest and active piety on the part of those who had already been walking in the good and the right way. It has been an arresting phenomenon of our day. In the material world, whenever any extraordinary events transpire, our men of science would deem it to be a dereliction of their duty did they fail to examine into all the particulars and turn them to account. We, my brethren, have to do with the moral world. And here, then, surely is a subject demanding inquiry from us. Make whatever deductions experience may dictate

on the score of mere excitement, or of too sanguine expectation; give all the weight which is due to the charge of weakness and extravagance mingling more or less in much of these movements—a feature in their history which can awaken in no considerate mind the least surprise;—still, on the evidence of witnesses of every description, and not a few of them possessed of the highest claims to respect for their judgment, and reliance on their accuracy, the fact is as certain as it is cheering that multitudes have been reclaimed from a life of wretchedness and guilt to peace and holiness; or, to say the least, from formalism and half-heartedness in religion to sincere and energetic devotedness. Who of us, my Reverend brethren, would not thank God, through all time and eternity, could he be permitted to see anything like this among the souls committed to his oversight? Alas, am I wrong in saying that there is a general lack of manifest conversions as the fruit of our ministries? Are we not sensible that we need most deeply some stirring of the conscience, and awakening of the heart, and determining of the character for God, in our several congregations? Doubtless there is among them a marked advance in propriety of conduct, if we compare the present in India with the past. Doubtless the growth of piety at home has reflected beneficially on our communities here; and there is a respect of Religion, yes, and an amount of true Christianity around us, for which

let us give our humble thanks and praise to Him who is the Author of all godliness. Still, are we, as a Christian people, what we should be? Can any minister of Christ here present stand up and say that he is satisfied? Do the majority of those who are his charge come up to the Scriptural standard of a truly Christian life? Is there not among us a felt deficiency of living faith in Christ, of ardent love to Him, of unworldly behaviour, and of simple zeal for God? Nay, taking our Christian communities in the mass, is there not an amount of irreligion that well may sadden the spirit, and abase the heart of every man of God who watches for their souls? Why is it that our Mission agencies have been wont to count the spheres which are farthest removed from the influence of large European stations the most favourable to their designs? Alas, alas, is it not because the moral atmosphere created by any great concourse of nominal Christians in this land has hitherto been found for the most part prejudicial, and not auxiliary, to the progress of the Gospel? There is no escaping the confession—we do want a revival, an awakening, a visitation from Heaven to the souls of our people. We want it for ourselves. We all want quickening—the dead, that they may live; the living, that they may have more life. And how is this to be? I shall not be expected in this place to discuss the various things which are said to have been done in connec-

tion with those religious awakenings to which I have alluded. From some which have been reported we all should instinctively shrink back. Sober piety will not approve them. But in one point we cannot be wrong in imitating any Christian men, whoever they may be. I mean in the cultivation of a spirit of earnest prayer. If, to use the figure of the prophet Hosea, we are to “revive as the corn, and grow as the vine,” then, as that same prophet teaches, we must take with us words, and turn unto the Lord, and say unto him, “Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously ; so will we render the calves of our lips.” The blessing will come in answer to such prayer—the prayer of those who deeply feel their own and others’ need, and who are driven to the throne of grace to cry mightily unto God for the descent of His Spirit upon us. The promise of the outpouring of that Spirit is for them. Although in their own souls they be too like the dry and barren ground, yet do they mourn their parched and sterile state, and long for the windows of Heaven to open, and pour them out a blessing. It is written, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed ; and my blessing upon thine offspring ; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses : one shall say, I am the Lord’s, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ; and another shall subscribe

with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." And who, my brethren, ought to be the first to know the wants of others, and their own wants, and to invoke these showers of blessing? Who, but they upon whom the Lord has laid the high responsibility of tending his "husbandry," as "workers together with Him?" Forgive me for urging this consideration upon you. I know how ready we all are to recognise the duty of intercession for Christ's Church militant here on earth, and especially for that portion of it in which our own lot is cast. We do pray for it. But may I press the question? Do we pray with all that eagerness of desire which marks some strong and affecting sense of a great necessity? Do we, like Epaphras, "labour fervently in prayer" for our Christian brethren, "that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God?" And do we also pray with a distinct and full persuasion of the power of heart-felt, importunate petitions, offered in the name of the great Intercessor? Are we not often too feeble in our hold on his own most plain and precious word of promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you?" Yet, if a revival of true religion is to be looked for, ought it not to begin in the closets of God's ministers? And if only they were moved to some far more solicitous and believing entreaties for the souls around them than they ever yet have offered,

would God dishonour their petitions? And why should we not then pledge ourselves to one another on this sacred occasion to commence a new effort in prayer with this object in view? What more appropriate to such a gathering as this of the Clergy of a Diocese—for our brethren who are absent in the flesh are yet with us in the spirit—than that they should make the increase of living godliness in the entire flock which God has given them a subject of special and primary consideration? If we do not this, for what do we come together? If the promotion of saving piety throughout the Diocese is not the mark before us, what else is it? And to that end can there be anything more acceptable to our Master in Heaven than that we should first excite ourselves, as pastors of his flock, to call down upon those for whom He died, by our own fervency of supplication in His name, the gifts of the Holy Ghost? Has He not left us an emphatic encouragement to this union in prayer, expressly engaging that when we agree together touching that which we shall ask, it shall be done for us of our Father which is in Heaven? Then let us come to this agreement now. Let us enter into covenant this day that we will pray and plead, as we never yet have done, for the effusion of the Spirit of Grace upon the Christian people of this Diocese. Let us do it not as so many isolated individuals; but, bound together as we are in the relations of

one Communion, let us blend our aspirations in sympathetic concord. We cannot, indeed, as a body, meet for prayer; nor does our Lord make it necessary that we should. It is agreement in what we ask that He requires. Why not then consent, all of us, all the clergy of this Diocese, say on every Sunday evening, before we lay our heads upon our pillows, to send up to Heaven one common, fervent, persevering, believing intreaty that the Holy Ghost may, for Jesus' sake, come down, and work throughout our Diocese his own true work in such a way that we may see a large increase of conversions among the hitherto unconverted, and a manifest growth in grace among those who already are on the Lord's side. Our Sunday's duty may well have such a termination. For in vain assuredly is all our labour, if it be not followed by that gracious rain which alone can make the garden of the Lord to thrive. "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." But, together with these our own intercessions, individual and combined, ought we not to do something to evoke like intercession on the part of those in our several congregations who know what it is to pray? Special services, bringing together in the house of prayer all whose hearts are ready to go with us to the mercy seat, are eminently useful to this end. The Litany will often be found very appropriate to these occasions.

And if a short lecture from the pulpit be closed, after the manner of some of our Homilies, with a few petitions, expressive of the desires of all true worshippers, and beseeching the Father of mercies, for His dear Son's sake, to revive His work in the midst of our days, the service, though brief, will have a character peculiarly its own. And special seasons too will lend us their aid. We need not take on ourselves to appoint them, for our Church has already ordained them. What time, for example, more fitting for her ministers and members to be sending up in public and private their united supplications for the enlarged bestowment of the Spirit, than when, for at least ten days together, from the Sunday after Ascension Day to the Tuesday in Whitsun Week, we are bidden to be constantly imploring that Heavenly Gift? Yet, we may not confine ourselves to one season in the year. Let us give the subject a greater prominence at all times. Let us press it on our brethren frequently. Let us exhort them to believe that the Holy Ghost will assuredly be given in larger measure, if only the people of the Lord shall agree to ask for It with more importunity, and with more faith. Let us stir up ourselves and them to a more definite and firm persuasion touching the efficacy of a faithful, fervent wrestling in spirit with Him who loves to hear His suppliant say, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." So let us learn ourselves to pray—so let

us call upon others to pray—even as those who believe that God is indeed “the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Let us put it to every praying man to think how much his own individual urgency may help to swell the flood of mercy when it breaks. Will such appeals to any true Christian be in vain? Rather, shall not heart after heart in many a secret chamber be pouring out its felt petitions, while all, in the sight of Him to whom those hearts are open, ascending in one cloud of supplication, and mingling with the incense of the Great High Priest before the throne, shall come up with acceptance before Him. And if once we can attain to something so blessed as this, a Diocese uniting in the persons of its pastors and people to beg of God a revival of His work among them, can we doubt of the issue? Then let us set ourselves to aim at this. I have suggested nothing but what, as consistent members of our Church, it is competent for us to do. I know what exalted devotion that Church has, by God’s grace, been capable of nurturing; and I am content, nay, constrained in conscience to walk within the limits which, as it seems to me, her spirit and intention have set. We have no need to go beyond them. I am more and more persuaded that the true way for us to do good, and to gain good, is to work in consistency with the constitution of our own Communion to the utmost of our power; while towards other Communions

we strive to exercise the charity that comes "of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned." Let us thank God for whatever blessing He may grant to them ; but, so long as they are other communions, avowing by that fact a solemn conviction that separation from one another is a necessary duty, and that to join each other's Church would be a sin against conscience, if not against God, I quite think that real love is promoted, not by union without unity, but by concurrent action in all good works as distinct from compromise. It is surely a fallacy to argue for such compromise by the use of texts from Holy Scripture which do not apply to the case. When those texts were penned the body of Christ was one. The Apostles had no thought of discrepant Churches, with opposing governments, sectional ministries, and separate congregations. The whole thing was utterly foreign to their views ; as is sufficiently clear from the strong hand with which they met the first tendencies to division among Christian people. I am not now at all touching the point—Who is to blame for the present state of things ? My belief is, we are all to blame for it more or less. But what I mean to say is this, that nothing which was written as to the duty of union, when the whole Church was yet unbroken, can be legitimately used to justify, still less to demand, the compression into a seeming alliance of different bodies who

declare themselves to be so seriously at variance, that they must, as a rule, communicate apart. The Apostles contemplated no such union as this. Indeed, the relation in which these bodies stand to one another among us, is a saddening proof of the faultiness of our spiritual condition, and of its utter repugnance to the principles of the Apostolic model. Disunited as we are, we may well wonder that God grants to us the grace we have. And if it shall please Him to bestow on our own, and on other Communion more grace, I fain would hope that it will be in order to more concord; that all good men will begin to ask, Why are we thus divided? Are these separations incurable? And so, in God's own wonder-working providence, a way may be opened for real fellowship, for "one body" as well as "one spirit," as it was at the first, and as it will be again at the last, when our Lord shall come, and the visible union of His elect with Him in glory shall, as He has said, compel the world to believe, what it never will believe nor understand till then, that Christ's people are the loved of God. Meanwhile, my reverend brethren, for ourselves and our flocks, I would say, whatever we can consistently do, let us do to bring the Church of Christ among us, nearer and nearer to Him. "Where-to we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." We may reasonably doubt of some things, whether or no they are

our duty. But of this we can have no doubt, that to arise and pray, each of us in the place where God has set him, for the down-pouring of His Spirit, must be good and acceptable in His sight. "God, even our own God," let us be confident, "will bless us," if soberly and devoutly using the means which are available to us, we study to bring both ourselves and our people under some far more copious effusion of the Spirit than we yet have seen. Let us honour that Blessed Spirit, dear brethren, in all our ministrations. Let whatever we do and say declare our habit of dependence on His Almighty succour. And then may we not doubt, but earnestly believe, that He will raise up His power, and come among us, and grant us that petition so often hymned in our solemnities—Would that it were felt and meant as often as uttered !

Revive Thy dying Churches, Lord,
 And bid our drooping graces live ;
 And more that energy afford,
 A Saviour's blood alone can give.

(Hymn for the Holy Communion.)

There is another topic which has been brought very prominently forward at home since we last assembled, and which bears directly on the edification of our congregations here. I mean the revision of our Book of Common Prayer. One special ground upon which the desirableness of such a revision was urged, at least in the earlier period

of the discussion, was this, that our Services, as commonly celebrated, are too long, and that a liberty to curtail or re-adjust them would be conducive to the general good. Now here, in India, the liberty of curtailment has long been used. And what so reluctant an innovator as Bishop Middleton felt compelled to allow, and other Indian Prelates have sanctioned, it is superfluous for us to vindicate. Still, I think that they must have been sensible, as well as we, how advantageous it is that such things should be done on the warrant of authority expressly given to that end, and not by the assumption on the part of either Bishops or Clergy of a discretionary power. If ever a revision of the Prayer Book shall take place, this will doubtless be one benefit to result. Till then, I presume that we must continue to do as others have done before us. At the same time, I must confess how much I regret the loss to our people of any portion of what the Church has provided for them; and I will express my hope that nothing will be withholden from them, except when the omission is clearly for their benefit; or when, from infirmity of health, the officiating minister has no alternative. But the abbreviation of our Services has now become a minor argument altogether with the advocates of revision. They wish for alterations in the Services themselves. Their suggestions are sometimes such as a large body of Church-

men, of various complexions, would approve; as, for instance, when they would modify in the Burial Office certain expressions which are commonly taken to affirm in every case a favourable judgment on the character of the departed; and which it is almost hopeless to expect that the mass of our people will ever learn to interpret aright, and on the principle of the Church herself in her use of them. Other suggestions would also carry with them many reflecting minds; as, for example, when it is questioned whether the creed of Saint Athanasius is not of too elaborately theological a character to be put with advantage into the lips of every promiscuous congregation, and whether it would not be better to retain it only as a symbol of faith which the Church has received, and an exposition of doctrine for the Clergy to subscribe. Then, still other changes are proposed, with a view to guard the Church from being misapprehended by some, or misrepresented by others. The Baptismal Services, the Catechism, the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, and the Form of Ordination of Priests, all contain passages, the language of which, it is urged by the advocates of revision, is a stumbling-block to many, from the difficulty they have in apprehending the sense in which the Church employs it; while to others it affords, as they conceive, an opportunity of imputing to the Church a belief inconsistent with her Protestant character and teaching, as elsewhere

exhibited. But here, as well as in some other instances, we come upon points not to be handled but with exceeding delicacy. And if that delicacy be not brought to the treatment of them, we are better, far better, as we are. Neither you nor I, my brethren, dream of attributing to our Book of Common Prayer an incapability of improvement which can hardly belong to any composition short of superhuman. But we shall all, I believe, be of one sentiment in this, that to have our Formularies touched by any but the tenderest, the most reverent, and devout, and chastened minds, would only be a grievous calamity. For myself, I believe our Book of Common Prayer to have been one of Heaven's best gifts to our Church and nation. Its history certifies me of it. For, whatever the changes it has undergone, and perilous as have been the periods through which it has passed, it remains, to this day a book which God is pleased to bless with singular grace to Christian souls in all the world. If, therefore, it is to undergo revision, I humbly expect His hand to be in the transaction. I would look for His Providence to bring it to pass, and for His Spirit to give us the men to do it. Till then let us wait. Meanwhile, there are many considerations which may well sustain our patience. That which has ministered now to the wants of so many of the holiest men this earth has seen through generations past, we surely may go on to use,

content to pray as they have prayed, and to be attended in our devotions by the same guide which they found cause, in life and death, so lovingly to prize. Grant that here and there an expression is employed which is capable of being misunderstood, or of being perversely misapplied ; yet, on all essential points, we know well what was the intention of the Church by evidence contemporaneous with the compilation of these Formularies ; and we are satisfied that that intention was right and Scriptural ; and therefore we need not be troubled in mind, as though there was error to be laid to her charge. It were a wonder indeed, in a world like this, for any book to be so written as to be out of the reach of all wrong construction. Is the Book of God itself secure from this ? Moreover, when we come to look into the alterations which have been desired, we cannot fail to be struck by the fewness of the instances of which it can be said that they involve very momentous interests. Doubtless this is true in some cases ; but examine the conferences of by-gone times, as collected in Dr. Cardwell's most valuable work ; or go through the longest list of objections and recommendations as furnished by revisionists of the present day, and you will find the questions touching great and vital truths to be a singularly small proportion of the whole. For these reasons we may surely feel that we need not be impatient of delay.

One hasty step, one incautious change, one alteration unhappily made so as to disquiet any number of devout and godly minds, or to narrow, without cause, the ground on which so many men, loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, though varying considerably upon details, have been able to meet in one Communion, may inflict on us an injury with which nothing now complained of is for a moment to be compared. I will own that I am one of those who do think our precious Prayer Book might be rendered in some few particulars less open to mistake. But, until a body of calm, and learned, and pious men, equal to the undertaking, shall show themselves to be willing also to be entrusted with it, I think that we do well to take it as a sign that our duty for the present is to abide as we are, and be most thankful for what we have.

There is, however, another subject on which I am disposed to believe that revision is really needed; and this not only for the good of the parent Church at home, but more especially for the well-being of her several branches here and elsewhere in foreign parts. I refer to the Canons. Some of those Canons have indeed, as we all know, irrevocably fallen into disuse, on account of their inconsistency with the convictions to which, by an almost universal consent, men have now been brought on several points of Christian politics and duty. Who,

for example, would ask the Church of England at this day to enact Canons such as the second and ten following, or the sixty-fifth? We can account for their adoption in the age which gave them birth, because it was a time when dissent in religion was well nigh identical in the eyes of all governing authorities with disaffection to the State. Consequently, the exercise of men's own judgment, if it led them to differ from the Church by law established, was treated as a crime to be atoned for at once by repentance and submission, or else to be visited with the penalties of an ex-communication involving no small amount of civil disabilities. Laws of this kind have no force now, because all wise and good men are agreed that they are wrong in principle, and therefore only detrimental to the best interests of any Christian Church which should attempt to carry them out. Many more, however, of the Canons have lost their power, either from their obvious inapplicability to the altered circumstances of society, or else because they have been actually superseded by subsequent legislation in the Imperial Parliament. No Churchman, I think, can set himself to read the one hundred and forty-one deliberately through, and not be conscious of a certain feeling of annoyance and vexation at the thought of so many enactments on the Statute Book of his Church being manifestly out of place in this day, or absolutely neutralised by

the laws of the realm. The question will force itself upon him, whether it is wise for any community, and especially in days like these, to remain before the world with a code in its hands which, by its own acknowledg^ment, is to so large an extent obsolete and unobserved. On the ground of mere self-respect and policy, if not on far higher grounds, it may well be inquired whether such a code ought any longer to continue. States will not bear these incongruities; why should a Church? Still, a certain portion of the Canons are neither obsolete nor inappropriate to these times, but are highly salutary and necessary in the objects at which they aim, and only require some few modifications in order to render them capable of an exact observance. Of these the principal are such as relate to admission into sacred offices, and to the performance of pastoral duties, than which nothing can be more important to the welfare of every Christian Communion. Nevertheless, for lack of the modifications adverted to, it would be difficult, if not impracticable, in the case of most of these Canons, to yield to them an implicit obedience. The whole book therefore, we may say without arrogance, does require revision, if the Church is to stand as we would wish her to do in the presence of other Churches, and in the face of the world, consistent with herself, and in harmony with the circumstances and requirements of the times. But if, upon these

grounds, and having regard to the welfare of the Church at home, it is allowed that such a revision is desirable, is it not even more desirable still in respect to the various off-shoots of the parent stem springing up in foreign lands ? For when these Canons were originally framed, nothing was contemplated beyond the Church of England in England. What we now want is, a code of laws for the Church of England all over the world. Or rather, perhaps, the real desideratum is an enunciation of certain great principles and rules, as few and as simple as may be, to be every where applicable, and then some ordinance by which, the Church in England being provided with such other laws as are suited to her circumstances, the various Colonial Churches also may be enabled to adopt regulations for themselves, under the sanction of the See of Canterbury and of the British Crown. The Church in India, however, stands in a position different from that of the Colonial Churches generally. They are bodies created, under the Providence of God, by the consent of their respective members in faith, worship, and order ; and are becoming self-sustained. Their internal economy therefore seems properly a care of their own. And an approach to this self-government is, in fact, already being made. But we, English Churchmen in India, have no such local standing as the Colonial Churches have. We are simply so many members of the Anglican Communion living awhile

in this distant portion of the British Empire. Our Ecclesiastical establishments are not our own, but a provision made for us by Home Authorities. They are avowedly limited to meet the wants of only such members of our Church as are in the service of Government, and are by no means intended to be co-extensive with the demands of our whole Communion here. Ours is therefore quite a case *per se*. As we now stand, any thing like internal action, in order to self-regulation, is out of the question. Our position is irreconcilable with such representative conventions as in the case of the Colonial Churches are indispensable to their self-government. Perhaps the right thing for us would be, so long as we remain in our present position, that whatever be the rules for the Church at home should be our rules also, all exceptional peculiarities being dealt with as the Metropolitan might recommend, the Archbishop of Canterbury approve, and the Sovereign allow. But then there is another question which would arise, and it is one which would affect the Church not in India only, but in almost all other parts of the world. I mean the adaptation of the Canons to our Missions. Missionary enterprises and Missionary cures formed no topics in the deliberations which issued in the Canons of 1603. Thank God, a great and happy change has passed over us since then; and the Church of England is at this hour sending forth her

bearers of glad tidings to every quarter of the globe. Their work, however, is of exceedingly various character, ranging through every phase of evangelization, from the breaking up of the fallow ground of utterly unchristianised lands, to the fencing in of fields white unto the harvest—yea, some of them already yielding their thirty, their sixty, and even their hundred-fold. Now, to insist upon the labourers in all these various stages of Missionary toil, and their converts with them, conforming to one and the same rule, and that a rule designed for a Church not in its infancy but in its maturity, would seem to be unreasonable indeed. Of course, in all things appertaining to doctrine, every Missionary of the Church of England can only teach as she teaches. And every Missionary clergyman, labouring within the limits of Episcopal jurisdiction, must own that jurisdiction as any other clergyman would do. But then I would have both the Bishop and the Missionary as much as possible released from any obligation, the one to enforce, the other to observe such rules as, however suited to a Church regularly organized, would only fetter operations which ought to be as free as Christian liberty can make them. The evangelist should be an untrammelled man, with license to teach whenever and wherever he may, and in whatever way he may find to be best fitted to gain the ear, and win the confidence, of those to whom he is sent. Unbending restrictions as to time,

or place, or outward forms, are mere impertinences, when the object is to pour in on a dark world the light of life. No doubt every faithful Missionary of the Church of England would always keep in view the annexation of his field of labour to the pastures of that Church, as, ecclesiastically speaking, the climax of his hopes. And while he is leading his converts onward in the paths of Christian truth and godliness, he will also be training them to observances which, if wisely introduced, may minister exceedingly to their good, but which, if prematurely forced upon them, would be too likely to produce either an unintelligent formalism, or a reactionary dislike. I would leave him therefore in all this preliminary work very much to the necessities of the occasion, and his own Christian common sense. His great business is to "seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, that they may be saved through Christ for ever." This must first be done; subordinate arrangements will follow. In all these aspects, however, of our beloved Church, whether viewed at home, or in the colony, in the Indian Empire, or in the Missionary field, it does appear to me that the time is come when a revision of her Canons ought not to be long delayed. The question, I am aware, may be asked, How this revision is to be effected? And some will think that question so difficult to answer, that they may be prone to deem all discussion of the subject as

but useless speculation. I cannot take that view. Whenever a want is obvious and urgent, the remedy is never to be despaired of in a day of freedom and activity like this. If other methods seem unpromising, a Royal Commission, if composed of men, clerical and lay, whose names would concentrate all that the Church had a right to require, might prove the simplest and most practicable expedient. But, until something is done in this matter, must we not own that, as a Church, our situation is neither consistent in the eyes of others, nor satisfactory to ourselves?

I should trespass far too largely on your patience, did I suffer myself to dwell on various other topics of interest to the cause of Religion, and especially in our own Church at this time, which may seem to invite some notice on occasions like the present. But there is one which I regard with so much seriousness, that you will bear with me if I venture on a few remarks in reference to it. It is a lamentable fact that there has sprung up in England of late a certain school of criticism, whose treatment of the Volume of Inspiration is likely to prove ensnaring to many minds, and that no less in our European communities here, than in corresponding circles at home. Indeed, I mention the subject, because I have my apprehensions that the suggestions emanating from this source, will find, if they have not already

found, some acceptance among us. There are two directions in which the school alluded to is working most dangerously : first, by calling in question the Divine origin of Scripture, and then adopting a method of interpretation of the sacred text, under which its narratives melt away into mythical tales, and lose all their historical truth. Tendencies of this kind have indeed been manifesting themselves for some years past at home in various quarters ; but it is sad indeed for us to see them culminate at length in the form of Essays and Reviews from the pen of professed members of our own Church, and all of them, with one exception, filling places of more or less distinction among her Clergy. To hear such men casting discredit on the evidence from both Miracles and Prophecy ; reproducing arguments, which have been answered once and again, with a view of divesting the Holy Volume of its Divine authority ; declaring it hard to demonstrate from Scripture any complete system of doctrine or practice ; disposing of what the Bible relates for matter of fact, as but “ ideal ” or “ legendary narrative,” and leaving it to every reader’s own “ consciousness,” or, as it is termed, his “ verifying faculty,” to select what he shall believe—Is it not distressing and alarming in the extreme ? I am not here, my Reverend brethren, to combat the errors of this system, or to pretend to furnish you with arguments against it. Your own reading and

reflection will do this. But what I will take upon myself is, to offer to your consideration some thoughts as to our duty in respect to this peril of our times. I cannot think it to be right that any of our charge, whose minds may have come under such injurious influences, should have reason to deem of us as of men who know nothing of what is going on in the world of intellect around them. They should not be left to suppose that we either do not know, or fear to notice, the existence of notions so contrary to our own. And yet, on the other hand, it would be a very grave and grievous mistake on our part, did we leave our grand absorbing theme, "the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God," to be setting before our congregations sceptical cavillings, and erroneous interpretations, in order to refute them. These things cannot nurture souls; and therefore we, who are charged to "feed the flock of God," must take heed how we touch them, lest, while we are reasoning, that flock should be starving. But is there no way of uniting both objects—on the one hand, the indication of dangerous error in such a way as to guard our hearers against it; on the other, the exhibition of Gospel truth so as to keep before them continually those blessed realities whereby alone they live? I cannot but hope there is. I believe that the pastor, whose mind is vigilant, for his own sake and for his people's sake, against the errors of his day, whatever they

may be, will almost always find, in the ordinary course of his expositions of Scripture, openings for all which he needs to say, if only he is skilful to avail himself of them. For there is a marvellous fecundity, if I may so call it, in the words of Inspiration. They teem with truth stretching out in every direction ; and if we are but on the watch for our opportunities, we shall find, as we go on unfolding text after text, that those opportunities are by no means rare for dropping here and there the thought, the fact, the argument, which, in a few brief sentences, may recall some waverer to forgotten or unnoticed truth, and warn him of the dangerous ground on the verge of which he was treading. I am disposed to think that such incidental touches come more powerfully to the mind than elaborately wrought and set discourses. They fall more naturally on the ear ; they are less antagonistic, and therefore more likely to do good ; and while they let such as need it understand that the preacher has his eyes open to what is transpiring around him, they in no way divert the great body of his congregation from the things most needful for their soul's health. I once heard it said by a person of great intelligence, in reference to clergyman of high standing in London, now some years deceased, that any one listening to him for twelve months together would find that he had been carried well nigh over the whole circle of Christian Evidences ; and yet that same clergy-

man was one around whom men of the deepest religious feeling gathered, simply because of the power with which his preaching met the spiritual wants of which they were conscious. There is, in fact, no need to preach to the hearts of men as though they had no intellects ; neither so to address their intellects as though they had no hearts. At all events, my brethren, it will not do for us to forget that our hearers have intellects, and that those intellects are lying open to suggestions calculated to undermine the very foundations of our Christian faith ; and we must preach accordingly. Above all, let us remember that there is one class of evidences of the truth of Christianity which, while most forcible to convince, are at the same time most salutary to instruct, to comfort, and to confirm. They are the evidences internal to the Gospel itself. Would that we could see our hearers apprehending these, and we should have little cause to fear lest they be borne away by the errors which assail them. Only let them have that witness in themselves, that sense of the truth of the Gospel which is derived from its own internal excellence, its suitability to their wants, and its power over their hearts, and they would have “an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast.” Let us pray God to make us such teachers of His word, that, by the grace of His Spirit, we may build up our brethren in this experimental acquaintance with “the truth as it

is in Jesus." It is, after all, the only sure defence against either the insidious encroachments of a sceptical philosophy, or the more overt aggressions of avowed unbelief.

Let me pass from the interests of the Sacred Volume among ourselves, to another question affecting its position in India. I allude to its introduction, under certain conditions, into the Government schools. The matter is one which may well be thought to have been sufficiently debated ; but I will beg permission to say a few words upon it, because I find myself, the more that I reflect upon the point, disposed to take a place with neither of the two principal parties who are engaged in the discussion. My belief is that, for the present at least, the best thing to be done is to allow of a voluntary reading of the Scriptures, and no more ; that is to say, let the text be read, but no comment or instruction given in the school. I fail to see any sufficient reason why both parties should not meet on this ground. So long as the reading is voluntary, the Government is free from all imputation of taking a side, or of aiming to proselytise ; it will be merely allowing its subjects to follow their own wishes. On the other hand, those who are solicitous for the institution of Native youth in the truths of Divine Revelation, will gain, I believe, all which they can reasonably ask the Government to grant. For when

they press for religious instruction to be given in Government schools, additional to the reading of the text, they seem to me to forget the circumstances in which we stand. In order to give this instruction, there must be teachers qualified to impart it. And whence are these to be obtained for a long, long while to come? They must be Christian men of course; and, with but few exceptions, they must also be natives of this country. And how soon will these be found in numbers adequate to the demand, and of competency to the task? Moreover, there is another consideration, which to a Government would be an embarrassing one. These teachers, when found, would necessarily be members of differing communions—Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, Wesleyan. Now, if Government employs them as religious instructors at all, it must let them teach according to their several convictions. They will come, in their reading of Scripture, upon passages which, if they are to give explanations, must call out their differences; and can Government put its *imprimatur* on all these? Yet this it will do, if it employ this variety of teachers. It is not like the grant-in-aid system. There the Government lends its assistance to schools of differing communions, avowedly ignoring their religious tenets. But if it takes men into its pay on the understanding that they are to teach religion, then it makes itself the propagator of their tenets,

however diverse or even contradictory they may be. For these reasons I cannot see how the Indian Government, as such, can undertake to give religious instruction in its seminaries. But if it limits itself to the simple voluntary reading of the sacred text, it escapes all these difficulties; and it may employ at once as many Christian teachers as it can find equal to the work. And even teachers, not yet Christian, will be ready in large numbers to go so far as to read the Scriptures with their scholars, some from mere intellectual interest in the Book, others from a higher motive, and because they think, and think rightly, that its morality must tend to improve their scholars' minds. Meanwhile, if those excellent men, some of India's best friends, who are urgent for Christian instruction on the part of Government, would abate this point, and be content with the Holy Bible simply read, I am sanguine in the belief that they would soon have reason to be satisfied. There is a wonderful power which goes with the word of God when left in its solitary dignity to speak for itself; and India has witnessed this abundantly. Only let the Bible be heard, and inquiries will be excited, impressions made, and solitudes awakened, destined to issue in the happiest results. A moral tone, too, would be created, preparing the way for better things; and a substratum of Divine truth would be laid in thousands of minds on which the Missionary preacher would

hereafter build, without having to spend so much time and toil as now in inculcating the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. The only objection which has seemed to me to be alleged with any weight against the voluntary reading of the Bible in Government schools is this, that the greater proportion of teachers must for a long period be unbelievers; and that, if we allow them and their pupils to have the Holy Bible in their hands, we cannot protect it against the insult which even by look and tone might sometimes be cast upon it. I grant that this might occasionally be the case. But still, I do not consider it a sufficient argument against the measure; for the same reasoning might be brought against the distribution of the sacred Scriptures generally. Can we be always sure that they will meet with reverent use? Even in our own schools do they never experience the contrary? Must we not in all these cases cast our bread upon the waters, and trust that, in spite of all adverse circumstances, He who has said that His word shall not return to him void, will make it to prosper in the thing whereunto He has sent it?

But I must draw to a close. Not, however, without first tendering my best thanks to the Clergy for the answers they have given to the Circular which I addressed to them with a view to this Visitation. I am greatly indebted to them for the information

which they have furnished, and also for the opinions and suggestions with which that information has, in many instances, been accompanied. I need not assure them that every thing which they have written will be reviewed with all the interest and attention which communications of such a character demand.

And now, before we separate, I trust that I may, without risk of misconception, allude to one feature in the state of society around us, with which it strikes me that you and I, my Reverend brethren, may connect a reflection to work in our own minds for good. Every thing in India is full of change; and in all directions expressions are to be heard which tell the unsettling and disquieting effect which that change is producing. We hear language now which a few years since we were little used to. Men say that they have lost heart; that India is not the place to them it was; that they have now no interest in it; that, as soon as they can, they will quit it. One cannot be surprised at this; perhaps it is very natural, especially in those who have lived long in the country. Whether it is right, is another question which we need not now discuss. But what occurs to my own mind is this—How thankful the ministers of God in India may be for the advantage which, at such a time, they have from the very nature of their work! It is true

that changes are coming on, the issue of which we cannot foresee. What the state of British India will be a few years hence, the boldest prophet may well hesitate to predict. But while with many this operates too much for only disturbance, or even discontent, casting as it does over their pursuits and prospects a disheartening uncertainty, with us it is otherwise. With the Gospel in our hands, and the souls of men about us for our charge, our work remains unchanged ; and nothing of the kind to which we have just alluded need exercise any depressing influence on our minds. Let us be on our guard against it. Far be from us the downcast spirit which, because of the incertitude that may hang about public affairs, is ready to wrap itself up in a selfish indifferentism, or perfunctory routine, and let all zeal in duty die away. We hold a commission which no mutations in the politics of this world can touch. Our master rules in that world unseen with sovereign sway ; and only let us do His bidding, animated by true love to Him, in full reliance on the Omnipresence of His Spirit, and in all affectionate fidelity toward those to whom He sends us ; and, whatever else may wax or wane, our ministry abides. His word to us is this, “ Lo, I am with you always.” Therefore be it ours to take our tone not from the things which are seen, and which are temporal, but from those which are not seen, and which are eternal. Let us give ourselves to our calling not as hirelings

for their day, but as men who have to deal with immutable truths, and immortal spirits, and an unchanging God. Let us keep our minds in the presence of these eternal realities; and so, banishing from us the low idea of only getting through a task with as little trouble as we may, we shall go to our posts, wherever they may be, and labour there for that reward which Christ has for us, and which, when all things else decay, shall yet endure, even souls for ever blest and saved, our “crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.” The Church in India has had bright instances of this pastoral devotedness, and an unswerving pursuit of the grand object of its ministry for us to imitate. It is but a few days since the grave closed over one known widely throughout India, and esteemed and loved wherever known, for the worth of his personal character, and the cordiality of his friendship, but to be remembered and emulated by his brethren, most of all, for the abundance of his labours—my late Right Reverend friend, Dr. Dealtry, Bishop of Madras. For many years a Bengal Chaplain, and then Archdeacon of Calcutta, he had been distinguished throughout his course of usefulness for eminent sedulity and zeal. And when promoted to the See of Madras, these excellencies were only the more conspicuous. Arduous and trying as his duties often were, his application to them never flagged, and he was instant in them to the last. His European

flocks, and no less his thousands and tens of thousands of Native Churchmen, the glory of that Diocese, had all his heart. Long will he be borne in the memory of both as one who spent himself in their service with ungrudging toil. The summons of his Lord found him at his post in all his wonted diligence, and he departed only lamenting that he had not done more for Christ, and for Christ's cause. May no such example, my brethren, be lost upon us; but be it our holy ambition, each in his station, to earn that greeting at the last which our gracious Master has for all who truly occupy their talents to His praise—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

FORT WILLIAM, HOME DEPARTMENT,

The 10th September 1860.

HER Majesty's Government having expressed an opinion that it is most desirable that the Ecclesiastical buildings in India should be made available for the purpose of Divine Worship to the greatest possible extent, and having signified their desire that at any stations where Chaplains of the Church of Scotland are appointed to officiate to Her Majesty's Troops of the Presbyterian persuasion, the use of the Government Churches should be afforded to them, subject to suitable regulation in each case, the following are prescribed as general regulations under which a Church consecrated for the service of the Church of England may be used for Presbyterian Worship, subject in every instance to such further special regulations as the circumstances of the case may appear to require.

1st.—It shall be necessary to obtain the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese in each case.

2nd.—The Bishop, or the Church of England Chaplain, under the Bishop's instruction, shall fix the hour at which the Church shall be made available to the Presbyterian congregation.

3rd.—The Church shall not be used for the ser-

vice of any other denomination, not being of the Church of England, than Presbyterians, nor shall any other Minister officiate in it than a Minister of the Church of Scotland.

4th.—The care of the Church and Church furniture, and the expenditure and control of the Church Establishment shall remain exclusively in the hands of the Chaplain or Clergyman of the Church of England.

5th.—The Bishop of the Diocese may withdraw his assent to use the Church for Presbyterian Worship whenever he shall think fit.

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